

FACT SHEET: Bedrooms



smart&sustainable HOMES



In many of today's houses, a 'bedroom' may actually be converted to be used as a study, media room, home office, guest room, studio or play room. This flexibility can help to make a house adaptable to meet the current needs of its residents as well as their future needs. The challenge for residents is to balance the requirements of a specific use with this desire for flexibility.

Good bedroom design can improve the future adaptability of the home. General principles to consider include accessibility to a variety of rooms; allowing the range of rooms to accommodate a range of uses over time; and designing bedrooms with the safety, comfort and well-being of occupants in mind.

➤ General design

The **location and orientation** of the bedrooms should be appropriate to the site, local climate and other rooms within the house. Considering the needs of current and future occupants will allow appropriate design decisions to be made about dealing with outside sources of noise and the relationship between bedrooms and other areas of the house. It also helps to design for winter and summer sun, views, breezes and requirements of safety, security and accessibility.

Bedrooms facing the afternoon sun in summer should be **shielded** by wide roof overhangs, awnings, lattice, trees or shrubs. Western and eastern facing walls should be **insulated**. All windows, including bedroom windows should be protected from the rain and located to encourage **cross-ventilation**. Windows can be a combination of sliding and louvres which gives flexibility for ventilation.

High ceilings (2700mm) in bedrooms will allow hot air to rise above the living space. **Vents over doorways** (fanlights) and high positioned windows will allow the hot air to escape and ensure the room is more comfortable in summer. High ceilings will also allow for ceiling fans to be placed at a safe height.

Incorporate **adequate storage space** in the bedrooms to reduce the risk of people tripping on loose objects.

Smoke alarms are mandatory in new houses. In existing houses ensure a smoke alarm is located close enough to the bedrooms to wake someone when the door is closed.

➤ Windows and doors

Consider designing the room to **capture views from the bed**. This does not necessarily mean distant views, as long as the courtyard or garden is visually interesting. The window providing the view should have a sill height of no more than 600mm above the floor.

Security grills and insect screens on windows and external doors should have quick release security latches for escape in the case of a fire.

Doors with **lever handles** that are placed between 900mm and 1100mm above the floor are easier for most people to use.

Door catches will allow doors to be held open to encourage cross-ventilation and will prevent doors slamming shut against fingers and the door jamb.

➤ Lighting

Good lighting aids orientation and reduces the risk of injury due to tripping in the dark or shadowed areas. Too much light and glare from the sun or strong artificial lights can be uncomfortable and combine with shadows to create visual illusions. Ensure there is adequate lighting that is directed or diffused to avoid glare.

Natural lighting from well-positioned windows, doorways and **skylights** can reduce the cost of artificial lighting as well as create a pleasant atmosphere.

Use lighting appropriate to the purpose. Fluorescent tubes (straight, compact or round) provide good general lighting and are cheaper to run than the other common lighting options.

Large rocker type light switches installed in the bedrooms (and throughout the house) can be easily operated by people of all ages and abilities.



» Services

If a person is confined to bed, they should be able to answer the telephone or call for help if necessary. Install a **telephone point** beside the bed or alternatively outside the bedroom, and provide a powerpoint for a cordless phone charger beside the bed to ensure a telephone can be used in the room.

Provide **sufficient and well positioned powerpoints**. Consider likely alternative furniture layouts at the design stage, including bedside tables and computer desks. Plan the location of powerpoints, light switches, TV and network outlets, low energy task lighting and general lighting on your floor plans and discuss your requirements with your builder and electrician.

General purpose powerpoints are best placed at a minimum level of 600mm above the floor and 500mm away from internal corners for ease of access.

» Accessible bedroom design

At least one room within the house should be accessible to ensure your home is better able to meet the changing needs of your family and be adaptable to unexpected events. Having more than one accessible bedroom will provide the flexibility as needs arise to allow a sick, injured or mobility-restricted child or visiting relative to use the most appropriate room.

An accessible bedroom should be located along an **accessible path** with an accessible bathroom and toilet along the same path (refer to the **'Accessible Paths'** fact sheet). In instances where the main bedroom is designated as the accessible bedroom, it is often appropriate to assign the ensuite as the accessible or adaptable bathroom (refer to the **'Bathrooms'** fact sheet).

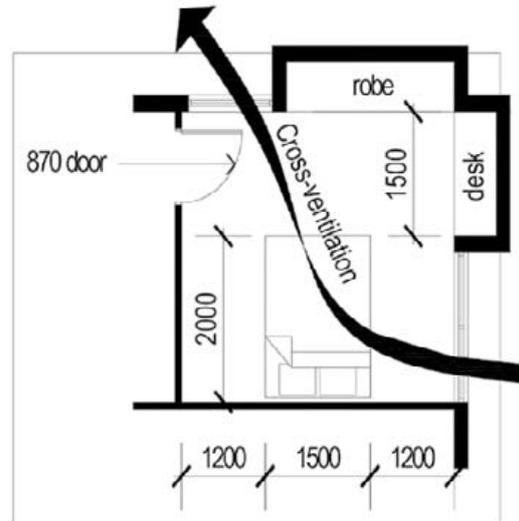
The bedroom should be spacious enough to include a queen size bed, with a 1500mm minimum clear space on at least one side or foot of the bed, and 1200 minimum clear space on two other sides, without restricting access to doorways and cupboards.

For further information:

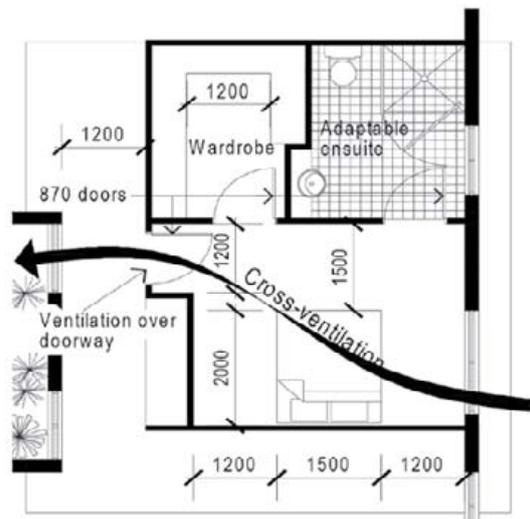
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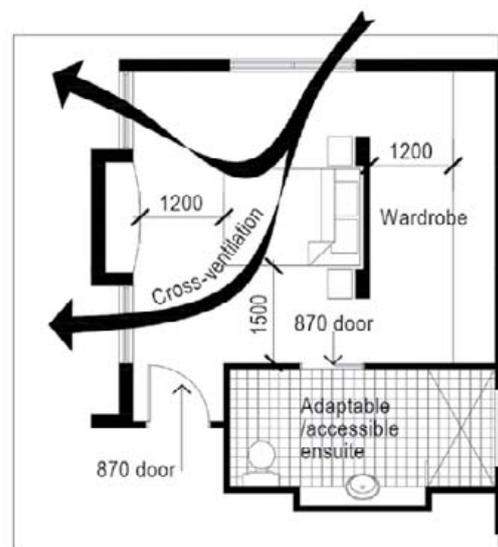
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Accessible Bedroom



Accessible Bedroom with an adaptable ensuite



Accessible Bedroom with an accessible ensuite